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Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Letter dated 25 February 2016 from the President of the General Assembly to Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations

This year, the United Nations will undertake the process to select and appoint its next Secretary-General, a matter which I consider to be among the most significant issues to be addressed by this Organization in 2016.

As you recall, guided by the principles of transparency and inclusivity, the President of the Security Council and I jointly circulated a letter dated 15 December 2015 which began the process of soliciting candidates for the position of Secretary-General (A/70/623-S/2015/988). As a result, we have received the names of six candidates to date, which have been duly circulated to the membership. A dedicated page on the website of the President of the General Assembly, which will be continually updated as future candidates are presented, provides a list of the names of all the candidates received as well as accompanying documents (see www.un.org/pga/70/sg).

As stated in the above-mentioned letter, we committed to offering candidates opportunities for informal dialogues or meetings with the members of our respective bodies. By its resolution 69/321 of 11 September 2015, the General Assembly specifically decided to conduct informal dialogues or meetings with candidates for the position of Secretary-General, without prejudice to any candidate who does not participate, thus contributing to the transparency and inclusivity of the process.

It is my intention to begin these meetings, from 12 to 14 April, for all candidates who have been formally presented by that time, based on and in accordance with the principles outlined in relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 69/321. The meetings will provide candidates with an opportunity to present their candidatures, and Member States with an opportunity to ask questions and interact with them. To this end, each candidate will be afforded a two-hour meeting slot. The annex to the present letter contains the anticipated format for the meetings, which will be replicated for any subsequent meetings in order to provide equal opportunities to all candidates. The informal dialogues or meetings will be as open and transparent as possible, with the considerable interest

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from the global public and civil society being duly kept in mind. A detailed agenda for these April meetings will be made available in due course.

With a view to facilitating an inspired interaction, candidates will be invited to provide a concise vision statement in a timely manner, which will allow the statement to be circulated through my office to Member States in advance of each informal meeting. These statements could lay out the candidates' vision on challenges and opportunities that the United Nations and the next Secretary-General may encounter, such as in the fields of peace and security, sustainable development, human rights, humanitarian response and issues pertaining to the management of the Organization.

Recalling the invitation for early presentation of candidates, and bearing in mind the desirability for the Secretary-General to be appointed as early as possible, additional meetings will, as mentioned above, be organized for any candidacies that may still be submitted. I take this opportunity to encourage Member States to present candidates in time to participate in the April meetings.

Pursuant to this round of dialogues, I will continue to assess the need for providing additional opportunities for exchanges with candidates. For example, I intend to invite all declared candidates to attend and observe the three high-level thematic debates, which I will convene in the coming months, and which will focus on the panoply of challenges and opportunities facing the United Nations at 70 and the next Secretary-General, across the three pillars of the work of the United Nations.

Given the considerable interest in these dialogues, I encourage mindful scheduling of other meetings. I also encourage representation at the ambassadorial level.

It is my sincere hope that these informal dialogues will help ensure the appointment of the best possible candidate for the position of Secretary-General.

(*Signed*) Mogens **Lykketoft**

Annex

General Assembly

Informal dialogues with candidates for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations

In line with the principles of transparency and inclusivity, the format of the informal dialogues will be based on the outline below.

- Candidates will be invited to provide a short, focused vision statement (up to 2,000 words), to be circulated through the Office of the President of the General Assembly, as received, ideally no later than one week in advance of the informal meeting.[a]
- A two-hour segment for each individual candidate will be chaired by the President of the General Assembly.
- An opening statement will be delivered by the candidate (10 minutes).
- Member States will pose questions on a first-come, first-served basis, bearing in mind requests from groups.
- Member States are strongly encouraged to limit their questions and comments to a maximum of two minutes and to focus on specific questions in an interactive manner. The President will enforce this time limit, as appropriate.
- Candidates will be given the opportunity to respond to Member States' interventions at regular intervals.
- Meetings will be open and broadcast on the Internet with interpretation in all official languages, and will follow General Assembly seating protocol. A link to each webcast will be posted on www.un.org/pga/70/sgfor future reference.
- One to two representatives from civil society will be given the floor, time permitting.

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[a] This statement could lay out the vision of the candidate on challenges and opportunities that the United Nations and the next Secretary-General may encounter, such as in the fields of peace and security, sustainable development, human rights, humanitarian response and issues pertaining to the management of the Organization.